The Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act (FSHO) prioritizes housing assistance for youth who have aged out of foster care and are at-risk of homelessness. Here’s the reality, from FSHO’s legislative text, on the “self-sufficiency” requirement, which ensures that youth are actively engaged and setting themselves up to transition successfully into independence. Local Public Housing Agencies (PHAs), in consultation with public child welfare agencies (PCWAs), will select one of the following options to implement.

**Option #1:** Youth satisfy one of the following criteria¹—
- Participating in education [(a) pursuing a high school diploma, GED, or postsecondary credential; or (b) enrolled in an institution of higher education as defined in statute]; or
- Participating in workforce development.
- At their discretion, PHAs may also consider employment as satisfying this Option.

**Option #2:** Youth comply with terms & conditions applicable under the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program, if offered by the PHA.
- FSS was endorsed by organizations like the National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) last year.

**Option #3:** Using any combination of criteria listed in Options #1 – #2, local PHAs may design (or ask local workforce development agencies to assist in designing) their own self-sufficiency/active engagement requirement.

**Exemptions:** The youth is— (a) incapable of complying with the requirement due to a documented medical condition; (b) a parent responsible for care of dependent child under 6; or (c) a regular, active participant in a drug/alcohol rehabilitation program.

**Grace Period:** Additionally, FSHO offers assisted foster alumni an initial 30-month grace period, during which they are exempt from compliance.

“To ensure that youth homelessness is a brief and rare occurrence and that youth have the tools necessary to be self-sufficient, completion of educational and vocational training activities can be particularly important. The foster care system is a well-known pipeline for youth homelessness and how states address the education of those in foster care is indicative of their commitment to more broadly prevent and end youth homelessness.” —State Index on Youth Homelessness 2018 (True Colors Fund in partnership with the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty)

For more information, or to cosponsor, please contact Dan Hare on Rep. Turner’s staff via e-mail or phone at 5-6465.

¹ Modeled after the requirements instituted for extended foster care pursuant to the bipartisan Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-351).